



Being in the Body

a work in progress document by Natasha Cox and Renata Minoldo

Being in the body.

A retreat to the center of the body and back again, as an individual and a collective body.

Being in the body plays out within a temporary assembled environment that borrows from communal spaces intrinsically linked to the tactile, it sits somewhere between a 'wellbeing' studio and late night club. Essentially places where one attempts to reach another level of understanding through the body.

What is the potential of these environments and their capacity to momentarily alter structures and assumptions that feed into and dictate our everyday lives?

The spatial design uses projection, transitional furniture, functional sound and light to encouraging the idea of group participation and to enhance and facilitate explorations of the physical, emotional and spiritual body,

We are interested in what happens when a group of people come together through a number of activities including guided meditation, free movement and sensorial exercises within this crafted environment.

These group activities are "not about having everything illuminated or obscured, but about conspiring and playing with shadows." ¹

The structure of the event takes influences from the teachings of Anna Halprin and the correspondence between friends throughout history, in particular the writings of Lygia Clark and Helio Oiticica and includes techniques from energy medicine, anti gymnastics and theatre of the oppressed.

There will be two phases, a phase of intimacy and a phase of opening. Starting with a smaller group the event and environment will then open up and adapt becoming a place where people can gather to further explore these ideas of friendship and collaboration by dancing together using free movement and music.

We aim to explore this **liminal space** between the awakening of the internal voice, or 'the voices of our invisible selves' and the awakening, through movement of the physical body, the fundamental meeting point between our practices and collaborative research.

This Book

We had the idea of reuniting some of the texts and images that have been part of our research for this project, which happened mainly through a gdoc shared document and whatsapp conversations. Resonating points pulled from texts, found online images and documentation of previous works by both of us are combined with original photos and writings we developed for this publication.

We would like to specially thank School of the Damned, the self organised alternative education program that has given us the space, time and care to develop our practices and become friends, to Imogen Wright and Yinka Shonibare from Guest Projects for kindly inviting us to be part of their 10th Anniversary event always supporting us and believing in our work and the School's ethos, and finally to Jamie Hudson who has assisted us to develop the publication on the occasion of *The House that heals the Soul* his residency at The Tetley, Leeds.

About us

Renata and Natasha met last year when they joined the current (2018) cohort of School of the Damned. Renata's practice links alternative healing methods and participatory experiences involving the body, feelings and emotions using different techniques from an intuitive perspective. Natasha's work aims to bring people together within a certain environment where they can experience and connect with each other. Her practice is based in still and moving image both in the live event and within the recording of the experience. This event connects our practices and is our first collaboration.



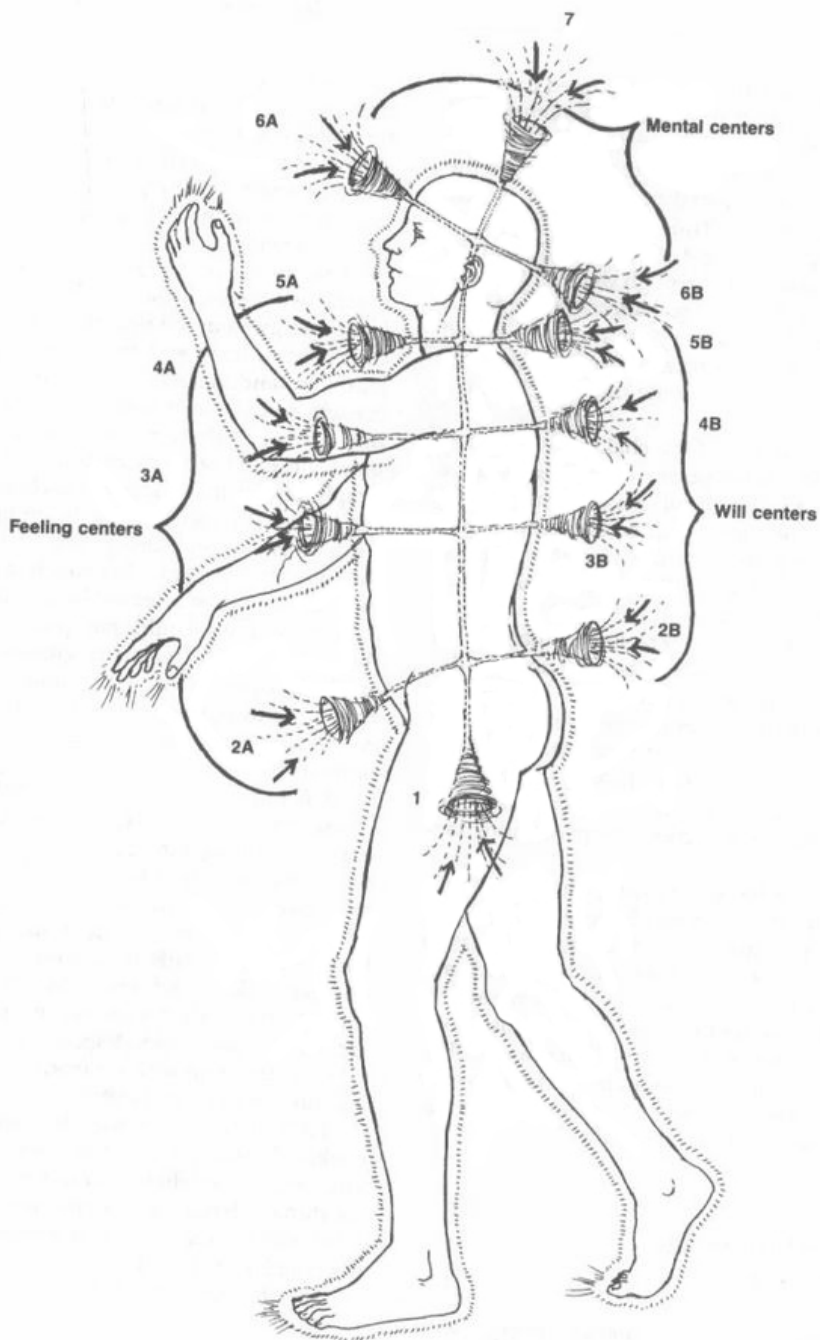


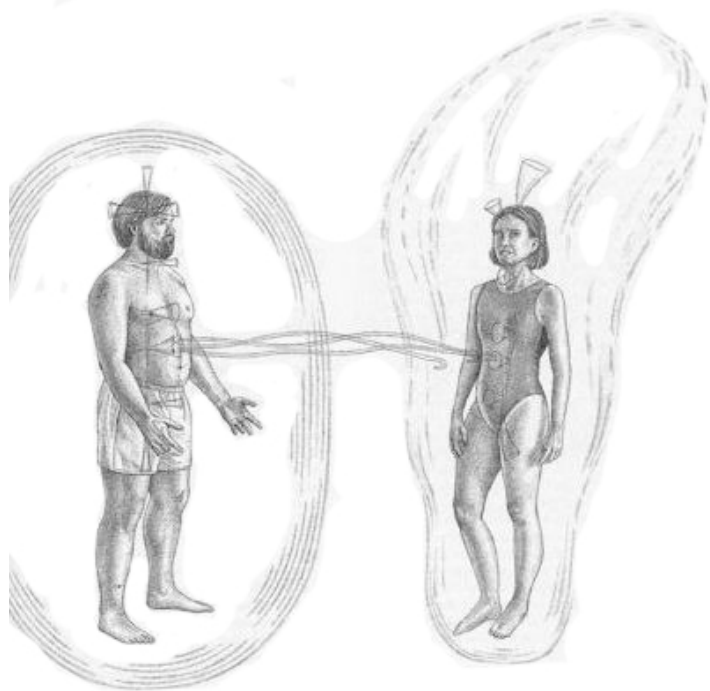
"daimons" the voices of our invisible selves.

When you speak with a true friend, she sees the daimons speaking over our shoulders, or perhaps our daimons confront each other in friendly recognition.¹













Bodies are no longer fleshy lumps of tissue and bone detached from the mind, they are portals.

Raves are the latest in a long history of Dionysiac spaces where social codes dissolve under the dual glow of moral skepticism and hedonistic pleasure. Places where mutual trust and collective anonymity help engender joyful acts of social transgression. 'Losing oneself' in a swarm of like-minded clubbers, the prosaic gestures of shared water and gum establishing a subtle aura of communistic good will from which to freely express one's self.

What's interesting to me, however, is the assumption of escape. That raves and rave music are about experiencing something *exterior*. Something outside of the banal platitudes of humdrum 'reality'. For in this sense, is it not antithetical then to assert the 'accessibility' of posthuman dissolution, through what could be translated as a mode of experiential withdrawal? To withdraw *and* access in the same movement?

In this sense raves are in fact machines; or what Deleuze and Guattari would call a 'desiring-machine'. They are an integrated system of technology and labour which *produces experience*. Rave's dance floor is an assemblage of psychological, chemical, electronic and corporeal software, rigged up through neurons, electrons, chemicals and sound waves. A decentralised and nonhierarchical cybernetic system, melding technology, matter and affect into a horizontal flow of collective acceleration. Its function as an experience is like that of a factory, constructing intensities that each component plugs in and responds to: lights/wavelengths, drugs/hormones, clothes/textures, mixers/frequencies, dancers/bodies, "a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end. **

Devoid of any clear determination each element is connected to a real-time feedback loop of continuous matter-energy, substituting a progressive and linear perception of time with a cyclic repetition of singular events; what Nietzsche would call the 'eternal return'. A series of techno-somatic events that flows *through* you and into the next. Raves are sex without genitals, pleasure without climax. Dial in, jack up and get loose.

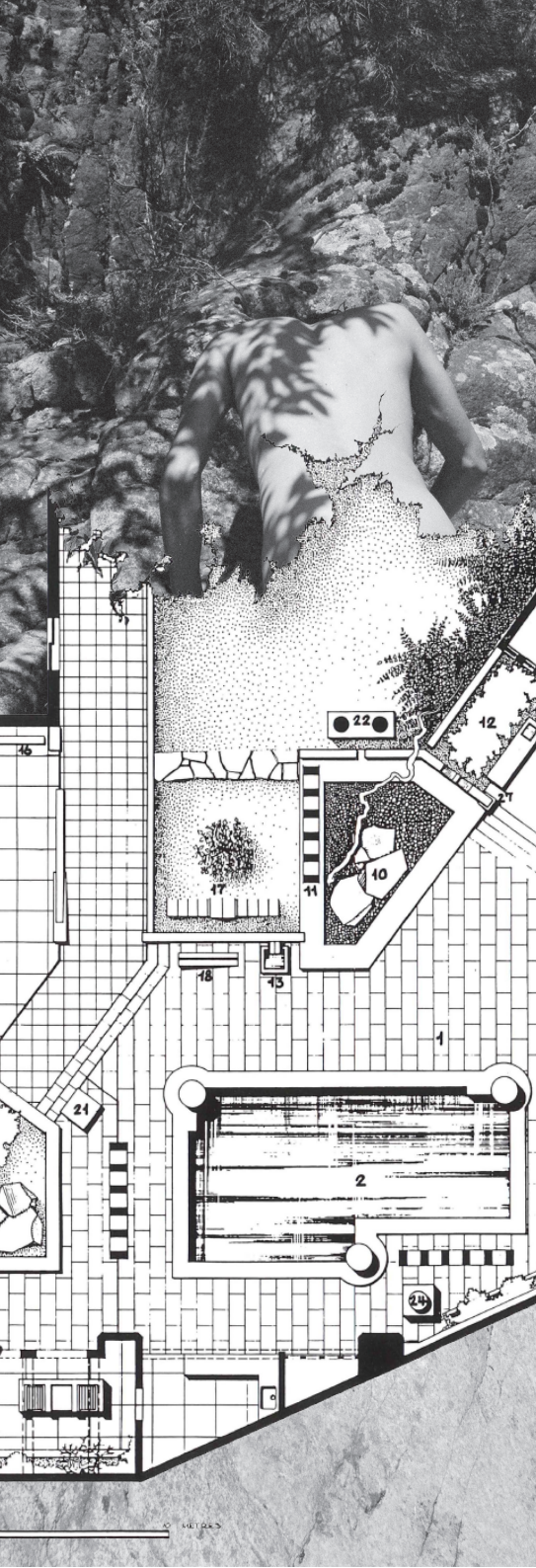
The disintegration of anthropocentric boundaries between human and non-human, nature and culture; or the auxiliary dualisms of mind/body, inside/outside.

Bodies are no longer fleshy lumps of tissue and bone detached from the mind, they are portals. Wormholes to the prepersonal continuum of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'The Body without Organs'

it is hard to discern where 'you' start and where 'they' or 'it' ends. Electro-libidinal wires are crisscrossed and welded together. Currents of sonic energy and dopamine rerouted through neighbouring bodies and technical apparatus.

* <http://www.berfrois.com/2018/04/charlie-mills-rave-ecology/>

** Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) pp. 2.



- 1 THEATRE OF MEMORY
- 2 WATERS OF REFLECTION
- 3 MEMORY HALL
- 4 TEMENOS: ALONE OF TRANQUILITY
- 5 SECRET GARDEN
- 6 PINNACLE OF PEACE
- 7 STAIRCASE OF DESIRE
- 8 GARDEN OF TEMPERANCE
- 9 SENTINELS OF SPACE-TIME
- 10 GARDEN OF QUINTESSENCE

- 11 GUSTERS OF REMEMBRANCE
- 12 SCENTED GARDEN
- 13 FOUNTAIN OF LAMENTS
- 14 DREAM OF TRANSCENDENCE
- 15 WINDOW OF PROMISE
- 16 MEMORY SCREEN
- 17 STEPS OF SAGACITY
- 18 DAMP OF DESIGNATION
- 19 SCREEN OF SERENITY
- 20 HERMITAGE OF SOLITUDE
- 21 SUN-DIAL
- 22 GATEWAY
- 23 MEMORIAL STUDIO
- 24 GARDENS OF MOUTH
- 25 VIEWING PLATFORM
- 26 CURSE OF THE MISSING ELEMENT
- 27 MISSING ELEMENT

ourselves in soft flesh.



in that blurred state

between awake and asleep when too many intake valves are open in the soul.

Like the terrestrial crust of the earth

which is proportionately ten times thinner than an eggshell, the skin of the soul

is a miracle of mutual pressures.









- objects have lost its significance
- it is used now as a mediator for participation.
- group events that addressed external relations (Oiticica) and interior psychological states (Clark)
- a necessity of the human body, in a first (primary) experience.
- Each day eat a new pear, to see if its good or not.
- Lived experience // vivencia poética
- because giving does not push aside the taking.
- The relax in participation is a non-repressive activity, which confuses and liberates truly unpredictable forces, and in this, I believe, you base yourself on your own experience.
- (how does your place/ race/ etc effect they way you can interact) Rougher ways of interaction because we have reached these issues from a more violent manner.
- Connects itself with the 'anti-universe' where things are there because it happens now.
- spectator- author. man turns himself in to an antentic beast.
- Empty - Full ----- the form and its own space. (Breath with me 1966) Lying on my back in my flat I can touch the ceiling with my breath.
- There no longer is the object to express any concept but the spectator who reaches more and more profoundly his own self
- losing more of my apparent personality entainly into the collective.









Movement has the capacity to take us to the home of the soul, the world within for which we have no names. Movement reaches our deepest nature, and dance creatively expresses it. Through dance, we can gain new insights into the mystery of our inner lives. When brought forth from the inside and forged by the desire to create personal change, dance has the power to heal the body, psyche and soul.

Dance helps us become present in many ways. Through our senses we inhabit and enter our body.

To pay attention to our motor and kinesthetic senses

Dance can be approached as a direct and natural way of move without any personalised aesthetics imposed from an outside authority.

Movement is happening everywhere all the time. It is the motion of our cells, the pulse of our blood, the rhythm of our breath. It is the ocean waves rising and falling and the alternating patterns of night and day. Movement is life.

When we begin to use the language of movement rather than the language of words, a different kind of image and emotion arises, which bypasses the controlling and censoring mind. Expressive movement reveals the unknown. Sensations, feelings, emotions and images that have been long buried in our bodies are revealed through movement.

To heal is to operate in many dimensions simultaneously, by aiming at attaining a state of emotional, mental, spiritual and physical health.

The body has an amazing amount of intuitive knowledge and insight that no one else can experience for us. Everything that we are and could become is housed in our bodies. The mind, the heart, the soul and the spirit is the body.

The socializing force of human society is often repressive, whereas animals express their emotions directly. When a dog is happy, it wags its tail, when excited, it will jump around. There is no expression of repression in an animal.

ANIMAL ALLIES: GUIDED

VISUALIZATION AND DRAWING

This next process is a guided visualization which I use as a way to help people find their animal allies. Prepare the participants by speaking clearly about what will happen next, e.g., “We are going to go on a guided visualization to find our ally who will reveal some message we need to hear. It is a mysterious way of receiving a message but in the mystery lies hidden truths.” Find your own way to introduce this material rather than repeating these words. It will be more convincing if you do. Have everyone find a comfortable position and begin to take them on this guided journey. Take enough time to allow people to make the images their own and to find their animals in their own time.

1. Use your breath to enter your body. Breathe deeply and relax.
2. In your mind’s eye, imagine a void. Fill this void with a sky, trees, water hole, a vast plain, a mountain, whatever natural environment you imagine. Take your time.
4. Find yourself in this environment. Start looking for a special species of animal. The smells and sounds of the environment are all around you. You are very excited and curious. Discover a place where you can sit down and rest. Although you are resting, you are very alert. Gradually become aware that you are being visited by a creature. Remain still and wait for this creature to come to you. Once it has arrived, begin to make friends with it. Study carefully how it moves, sounds, feels, and acts. Become so engrossed with this animal that you merge with its body and take on its form.
5. You are now this animal. How will you sound? How will you move? What will you do? Find the animal’s voice and movement and embody this animal.
6. Interact with the other animals in the environment.
7. When you are finished with this movement exploration, begin to return to your human form.

This part can take as long as an hour or be as brief as twenty minutes. People can become intensely engaged and you can expect a series of things to happen: fighting, playing, cuddling, protecting, etc. Sometimes there will be laughter, growling, or terror.

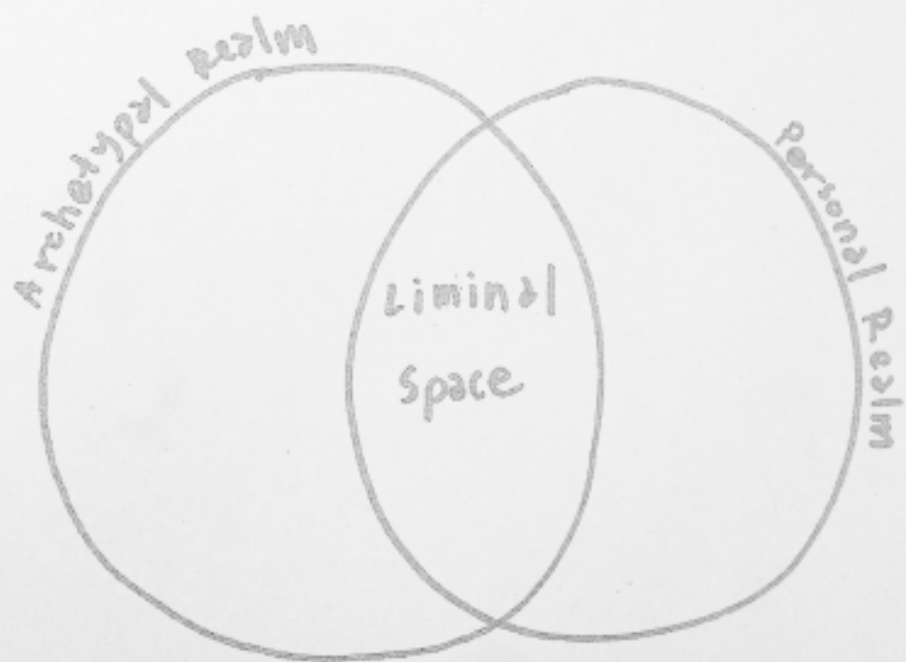
This exercise can be emotionally charged, but generally people enjoy the childlike and spontaneous atmosphere.

Another development of this exercise is to experience yourself as a human being behaving, responding, and interacting with your animal's characteristics. In other words, you would translate your animal characteristics into human behavior. This can be played out with everyone freely walking through the space, and contacting others in the guise of your "human animal." For example, if your animal ally is a tiger, you could take the energy of the tiger into your interactions with other people, and rather than growling at them or eating them as a tiger might, you would translate this into human behavior and language. This transference can bring your animal image into great immediacy.

D R A W I N G A N D D A N C I N G Y O U R A N I M A L

This part of the exercise will take thirty minutes or more.

1. Staying with the mood of your animal, immediately go to your drawing pad and make a drawing of your animal.
2. On another piece of paper, collect movement, feeling, action, and sound words about your animal. What might your animal do, feel, or say?
3. Circle four words you like.
4. Use these four words in a scrambled way to make a chant or tell a story. You can add prepositions.
5. In groups of three, dance your animal allies. One person dances her ally; another assists her by reinforcing or mirroring her movements. The third partner takes the words she has written and narrates or chants them while the other two dance. In all three roles, there is room for improvisation. The words need to be repeated and played with rather than read in an ordinary way.
6. Everybody has a turn and switches roles.



Extreme Slow Walk

"Moving as slowly as possible... step forward with the heel to the ground first, let the weight of the body shift along the outside edge of the foot to the small toe and across to the large toe.

As the weight of the body fully aligns with that foot then begin the transition of shifting to the other foot.

Small steps are recommended as balance may be challenged.

Maintain good posture, with shoulders relaxed and head erect.

Use your breathing.

The challenge for this exercise is that no matter how slow you are walking, you can always go much slower."

From "Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice" by Pauline Oliveros

TOO CLOSE TO SEE: NOTES ON FRIENDSHIP, A CONVERSATION WITH JOHAN
FREDERIK HARTLE Céline Condorelli*

The following text addresses the practice of friendship, as a specific entry in relation to the large question of how to live and work together towards change, as a way of acting in the world. Being a friend entails a commitment, a decision, and encompasses the implied positioning that any cultural activity requires. In the context of self-organisation, friendship is perhaps at its most evident in relation to a labour process.

While philosophy is the field in which friendship appears as a subject, it also holds the word friend (phíla) in its very name, so the two are intimately and inextricably linked.

The choices and alliances that we make all the time (such as which books to read and refer to, or whom to work and think with), are instrumental in the formation of culture. I find this notion of friendship and/or culture quite empowering, perhaps even liberating

If we speak about empowerment, let's also introduce Spinoza and his definition of friendship: for him friendship is an affectionate relationship in and through which humans mutually increase their potentia agendi, their vital capacities.

In other words, Spinoza sees friendship's highest potential as residing in the communal development of the intellect. I am particularly attracted to this view, as it emerges from refusing any ontological separation between mind and body. The formation of the common is, in this way, as much an agreement in terms of bodies as it is in terms of intellects, and the construction of a people is the construction of shared affects.

Could friendship be a form of production? Could cooperation (as in service-oriented or industrial labour) also be a form of friendship? Could we conceive of the multitude in terms of an infinite friendship? Friendship could become a model of self-organisation, in which the autonomous production of our own lives is central.

Self-consciousness is an effect of mutual recognition (and this could be a conception of friendship). But how does one know that friendship is really mutual? How do we know that it is mutual when there are no formalised rules that can be taken as evidence for this consent? Hegel emphasises the dimension of struggle (for recognition), a continuous process of, on the one hand, overcoming the resistance in the self-will of the other, and on the other, the movement of trust, of letting go. Hence friendship is not just a relation but also a process

This would indeed suggest that desire plays a part in friendship, but at one level removed: not as wanting something from the other. Friendship in these terms cannot be based simply on utility or pleasure, but as a desire for the other to exist, as a desire for life, and for cohabitation within it. This is the idea of living together and sharing acts and thoughts in common, so that what is shared is not property, things, objects, or even qualities (being this or that, including siblings, artists, or French) but an activity, a process of co-existence through doing and thinking.

Being friends might be a form of affectionate consent (sensed, felt, habitually agreed upon) rather than an intellectual agreement.

There are, however, also enabling powers to friendship. What is the potential of doing something in friendship? There is an emancipatory dimension to choosing one's allies, committing to issues and deciding to take them on, which can be a force that propels us forward. I think there is a collective aspect to this empowerment, which is the congruence between friendship and solidarity: the knowledge of engaging in a common project, of contributing to building the world, which is also how friendship leads to politics. This of course is also a drive to self-organisation.

Perhaps friendship is less about doing something together, constantly addressing each other, and more about enabling each to be oneself, allowing each other for the silence of not taking part. Friendship might be about shared loneliness rather than overly explicit togetherness.

While we have to end this conversation here, we could do that by proposing friendship as an elective affinity without finality.

SCENOGRAPHY OF FRIENDSHIP, Svetlana Boym*

We live in the world of friending, not friendships. Friend has become a euphemism for something more or less than friendship; a "friend" is a conspicuous casual acquaintance who overcrowds our homepage, or an inconspicuous lover who likes to escape home.

The word friendship shares etymologies with freedom in English, Freude (joy) in German, and with philia (affectionate love) in Romance languages and Greek. In Russian, the word for "friend," drug, is related to "the other," but not a foreign other, for which there is another word, inoi. The aspect of otherness is important because there are many things friendship is not. Friendship, in my understanding, is neither a conventional intimacy, nor a brotherhood or sisterhood, nor a networking opportunity. Rather, it is an elective affinity without finality, a relationship without plot or place in our society, an experience for its own sake. It is not always democratic or egalitarian, but rather selective and not entirely inclusive.

"friendship is - Rather, an elective affinity without finality, a relationship without plot or place in our society, an experience for its own sake"

"Writing about men and women in "dark times," Arendt observed that in circumstances of extremity, the illuminations do not come from philosophical concepts but from the "uncertain, flickering and often weak light" that men and women kindle and shed over the lifespan given to them. This luminous space where "men and women come out of their origins and reflect each other's sparks" is the space of humaneness and friendship that sheds light on the world of appearances we inhabit. In other words, friendship is not about having everything illuminated or obscured, but about conspiring and playing with shadows. Its goal is not enlightenment but luminosity, not a quest for the blinding truth but only for occasional lucidity and honesty."

"Hannah Arendt's relationship with Mary McCarthy can be described only through a series of oxymoronic expressions - luminous opacity, diasporic intimacy, asymmetrical reciprocity, impolite tactfulness, homoerotic heterogeneity."

“intended to communicate conclusions, but to stimulate others to independent thought, and this for no other purpose than to bring about a discourse between thinkers.”

“because true friendship is not always about instant gratification”

“ Such total exposure would kill the play of light and shadow that constitutes that special realm of existence.”

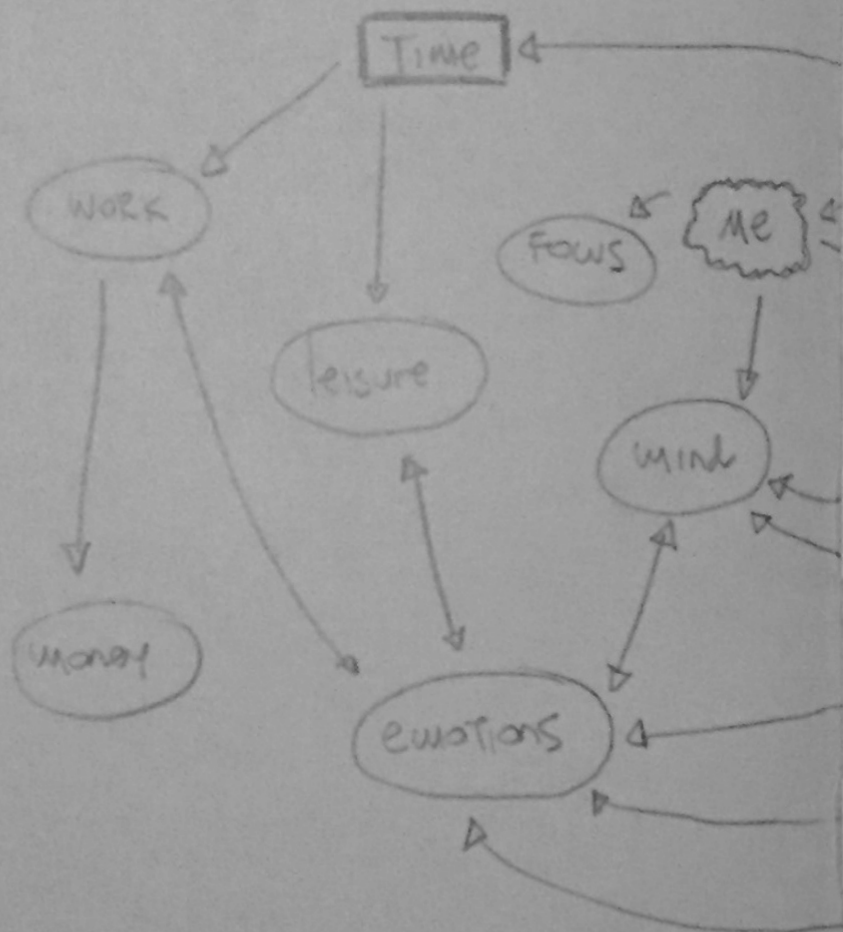
“ Intimate means “innermost,” “pertaining to a deep nature,” “very personal,” “sexual.” Yet, “to intimate” also means “to communicate with a hint or other indirect sign; to imply subtly.”

With friends, one can take part in multiple dialogues and share solitudes. Arendt wrote that solitude is different from loneliness because in solitude we are in dialogue with ourselves and with the world, while loneliness makes us isolated and tongue-tied. When experiencing solitude, we are playing on our internal stage with what the Greeks called “daimons” (not to be confused with demons; daimons are not to be exorcised since they are the voices of our invisible selves.) When you speak with a true friend, she sees the daimons speaking over our shoulders, or perhaps our daimons confront each other in friendly recognition. With a single good friend, we are in good and diverse company. In such a deep friendship, we multiply, create, and discover our actual and potential selves, not fall back stubbornly into the claustrophobia of our supposedly “true self.” Friendships are extensions of ourselves into the realm of liminal adventure.¹

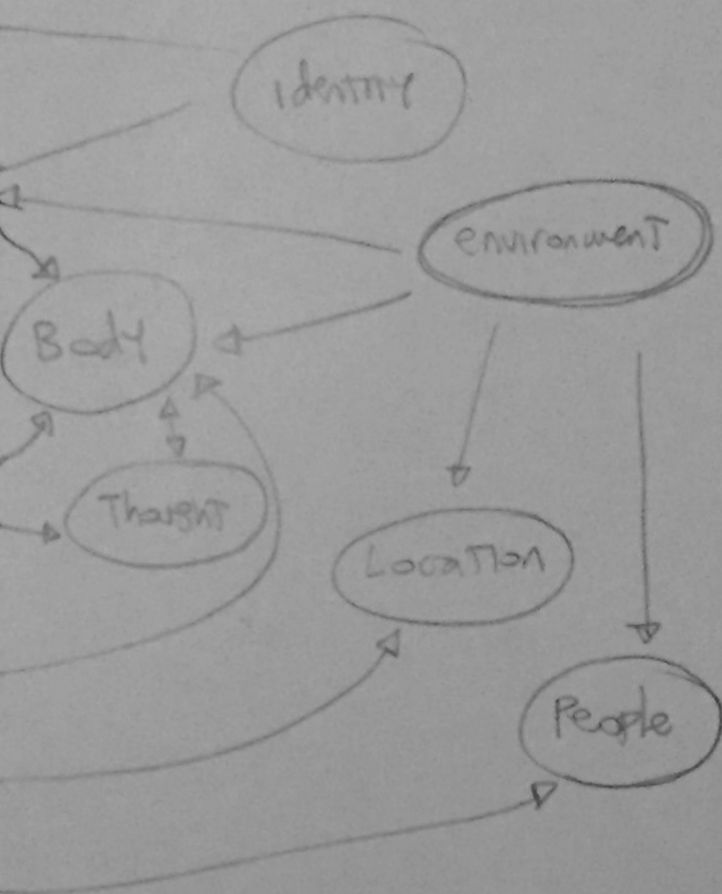
‘This is a body that is not one; it is at once public and private, untimely and contemporary, foreign and intensely familiar, with soft yet roughened furrows that belong to no traditional obituary.’

¹<http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/36/boym.php>

FACTORS AFFECTING MY



Identity



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Pages 8,9,12,13,22,23 were taken on location at Can Serrat residency, El Bruc, Spain.
Pages 16-17 taken of the occasion of *Sheer Gravy* a collaboration with Keira Greene.
Images by Natasha Cox

Black and white images by Renata Minoldo and Rebecca Halliwell Sutton are a documentation of *Studies For Self Knowledge part one*, a workshop by Renata at Islington Mill Gallery.

Pages 20 21 by Ania Mokrzycka

For **more info** about past projects please check:

<http://natashacox.co.uk/CO->

<http://www.renataminoldo.com/studies-for-self-knowledge>

